

*Scrobipalpa obsoletella* (Fischer von Röslerstamm): Porthcressa Beach, St Mary's one adult 24.viii; Porthcressa Beach a few larvae in stems of *Atriplex* sp. 1.ix; New Grimsby Harbour, Tresco, many larvae in stems of *Atriplex* sp. 1.ix. This species was omitted in error from Agassiz's list, Richardson & Mere (1958) having described it as common.

\**Blastobasis lignea* Walsingham: Hugh Town, one adult at actinic light 27.viii.

\**Blastodacna hellerella* (Duponchel): Bar Point, St Mary's, larvae in *Crataegus* berries 26.viii, moths bred.

\**Cydia janthinana* (Duponchel): Pelistry Bay, St Mary's, larvae in *Crataegus* berries 26.viii, moth bred.

\**Sitochroa palealis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller]): Porth Minnick, one larva on *Daucus carota* 24.viii and another on 29.viii, moth bred.

*Emmelina monodactyla* (Linnaeus): Gugh, several larvae on *Calystegia soldanella* 29.viii, moths bred. A foodplant not previously noted in the British Isles.

*Xanthorhoe spadicearia* ([Denis & Schiffermüller]): Hugh Town, three at actinic light 21.viii. (One, St Mary's, 30.v.74.)

*Eupithecia phoeniceata* (Rambur): Hugh Town, one at actinic light 19.viii. (One, Tresco 17.ix.74.)

*Plusia festucae* (Linnaeus): Hugh Town, one on *Buddleia* bloom 28.viii. Recorded as "Rare" by Agassiz but Richardson & Mere (1958) state "Rare Tresco, uncommon St Mary's."

#### References

- Agassiz, D.J.L., 1981. *A revised list of the Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies) of the Isles of Scilly*, 20pp., 1 map. Isles of Scilly Museum Association [Publication No. 14].
- Heckford, R.J., 1987. Lepidoptera recorded from the Isles of Scilly in May 1986. *Entomologist's Rec.J. Var.* 99: 268-270.
- Richardson, A & Mere, R.M., 1958. Some preliminary observations on the Lepidoptera of the Isles of Scilly with particular reference to Tresco. *Entomologist's Gaz.* 9: 115-147 2 pls.

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#### Mate competition in *Noctua pronuba* (Lep.: Noctuidae) Large Yellow Underwing.

At dusk in July 1988, near Lewes in East Sussex, I saw a fairly worn *Noctua pronuba* fly towards a small hawthorn bush and settle on it about 1.5m from the ground. It began to run urgently among the twigs. About 30cm from where the moth had landed I then noticed a newly-emerged female *pronuba* together with a male in fresh condition which was attempting to mate with her. All its attempts were unsuccessful, apparently because it persistently approached at the wrong angle, facing in the same direction as the (compliant) female. Eventually the latecoming male found the female

and literally shouldered her incompetent suitor out of the way by brute force before coupling almost instantaneously with her. I wondered whether, being fairly worn, this male had had previous experience of mating.

Preseumably similar little dramas happen frequently, but are seldom witnessed.—ROY LEVERTON, Whitewells, Ordiquhill, Cornhill, Banffshire AD45 2HS.

**Separation of *Semiothisa notata* Linnaeus and *S. alternaria* Hübner, the Peacock and Sharp-angled Peacock moths (Lep.: Geometridae)**

Previous authors state that the shape of the triangular sub-apical patch on the upperside of the forewings distinguish these species. Although this is usually reliable for specimens in good condition it is not always useful as a sole means of separation, particularly for worn individuals. Reference to the underside markings reveals additional characters which help identification and these are shown in the accompanying figure.

In *S. notata* the dark inter-nervural markings at the termen form elongated streaks which are broken only by the nervures themselves. In *S. alternaria* these markings are reduced to small dots except at the terminal indentation where they form bold blotches. Superficially these bold marks appear to be an extension of the dark wing fringes at this point, thus enhancing the sharply angulated apex characteristic of this species. Further, the forewing discal spots in *S. alternaria* are smaller but more clearly defined than those of *S. notata*.—ADRIAN M. RILEY, Dept. Entomology and Nematology, AFRC Inst. Arable Crops Research, Rothamsted Exp. Stn, Harpenden, Herts AL5 2JQ.

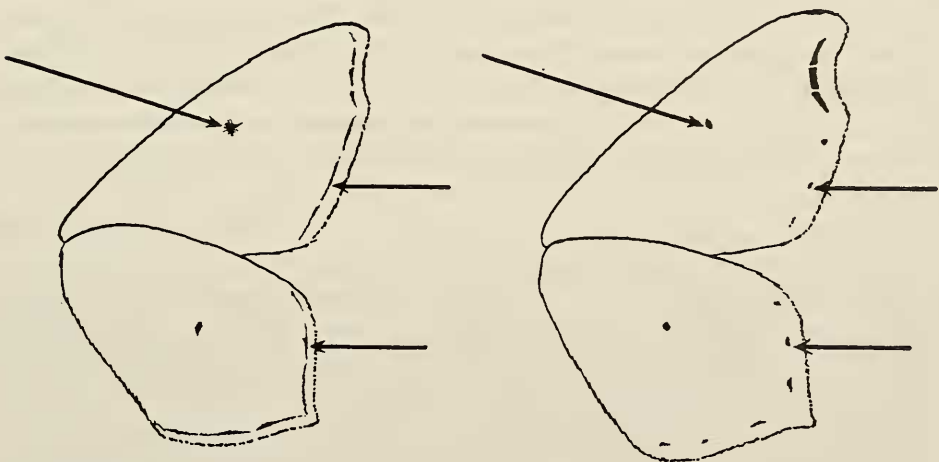


Fig. 1. *Semiothisa* spp.

*S. notata* L.

*S. alternaria* Hübner.